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**From:** CN=Richard Mylott/OU=R8/O=USEPA/C=US

**Sent:** Wed 10/3/2012 2:35:30 PM

**Subject:** Caspe Star Trib: Wyoming Gov. Mead: Wait for analysis of Pavillion data

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By ADAM VOGUE Star-Tribune energy reporter

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2012-10-02T22:00:00Z 2012-10-02T22:28:11Z Wyoming Gov. Mead: Wait for analysis of Pavillion dataBy ADAM VOGUE Star-Tribune energy reporter trib.com

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The state may have to examine its hydraulic fracturing rules if testing in the Pavillion area shows the oil and gas production technique contaminated groundwater there, Gov. Matt Mead said Tuesday.

State officials are awaiting an in-depth analysis of data from test wells in the Pavillion field released last week. Mead speculated Tuesday about what would happen if the analysis supports the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency's draft report last year that tentatively implicated fracking.

"In the event they go through these and say the EPA may have had it right, we have to figure out what to do as a state," he said in a Tuesday press conference.

Mead said the state could analyze whether Wyoming's first-in-the-nation rules for fracking, enacted after the technique was used in the Pavillion natural gas field, would have protected nearby wells.

"Would the rules now have prevented what happened? We'll look at that and whatever we need to do," he said. "If that's the case, we'll make sure rules and regulations are adequate. If not, we'll make those changes."

Hydraulic fracturing is a technique commonly used in oil and natural gas production which creates small breaks in geologic formations, allowing trapped oil and gas to be harvested more easily.

Mead declined Tuesday to judge the results from the U.S. Geological Survey's tests of two water wells in the Encana Oil and Gas-owned Pavillion field. He said he thought the EPA prematurely judged its own

test results released last year, and he'd be ill-advised to follow suit.

"I want to not go down the road of the EPA and drawing conclusions before we've looked at it," he said. "The (Wyoming) Department of Environmental Quality is going through many pages of data now and will hopefully be able to say, 'Here's the differences, here's the conclusions that can be drawn or not.'"

The EPA drilled two monitoring wells into the Pavillion natural gas field to test groundwater conditions in 2010.

Critics of the EPA's draft report released in December said the information hadn't been properly peer-reviewed. Encana called the study "rushed," and Mead pledged funding for additional testing.

The U.S. Geological Survey conducted additional tests in April and released the results last week. The agency released the highly technical data — essentially a table of test results — with no analysis.

Among the points of contention is whether both of the wells should be tested. The EPA tested both, but critics have said that at least one of the wells was improperly constructed and didn't have appropriate water flow for testing. The USGS chose not to test that well.

Mead said Tuesday he would have preferred the EPA didn't test the troubled well.

Doug Hock, spokesman for Encana Oil and Gas, agreed with Mead's sentiment about whether the second well should be tested.

He added in an email Tuesday that the newest data offered "nothing surprising."

"First, the USGS results provide no evidence that hydraulic fracturing has created impacts to groundwater," he wrote.

"Furthermore and more importantly, EPA has provided no sound scientific evidence that drilling has impacted domestic drinking water wells in the area."

Other parties involved in the matter agreed with Mead on Tuesday. John Fenton, a Pavillion landowner with two dozen wells on his property and member of the Pavillion Area Concerned Citizens, said he'd rather leave the analysis to experts.

"It's a lot of data to take in," he said. "I won't pretend to know what it means."

Bruce Pendery, attorney and program director for the Wyoming Outdoor Council, also said Mead's approach is a good one.

"We don't have internal staff capability to deeply analyze water quality chemistry data," he said. "If we wanted to critique what the USGS has done, we'd need to hire outside experts."

Instead, Pendery, Fenton, Mead and others will wait for a peer review, which is planned but has yet to be scheduled. Fenton said waiting for answers has been the worst part of the ordeal.

"In the meantime, a lot of people sitting here are really concerned about what's happening to their health and their future," he said.

"That's the hardest."

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